

CHURCH MANUAL



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Columbus, Indiana

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations. We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drink as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour. We further engage to watch over one another brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay. We moreover engage that, when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
COLUMBUS, INDIANA**

**CHURCH MANUAL 1940
REVISED 1951**

ARTICLE I. NAME

This church shall be known as The First Baptist Church of Columbus, Indiana.

ARTICLE II. OBJECT

Its object shall be the maintenance of the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the ordinances of the New Testament, the spiritual improvement of its members, and the conversion of the world to Christ.

ARTICLE III. FAITH and COVENANT

It adopts for its declaration of Faith the teachings of the New Testament.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1—Reception of Members

1. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and giving evidence of a change of heart, and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this church may, upon baptism, be received into its membership.
2. Members of other churches holding the same faith and order may be received into the fellowship of the church by letters of dismissal and recommendation from their respective churches.
3. Those who have been members of Baptist churches and in consequences of peculiar circumstances have no regular letters of dismissal, or persons coming from other denominations, who have

been scripturally baptized, may be received by giving satisfactory evidence of a change of heart, Christian conduct, and Scriptural faith.

4. Excluded members may be restored to membership upon confession of their errors, and giving evidence of repentance.
5. Any member may object to the reception of another, in which case the candidate for fellowship shall not be received until the objector is satisfied, or the objection is overruled by the church.

Section 2—General Duties of Members.

1. It shall be the duty of members of this church to attend the meetings appointed by its authority, to cultivate personal holiness and family devotion, to sustain the public worship of Almighty God, and the ordinances of the Gospel, to contribute for the support of the ministry, the necessary expenditures of the church, the spread of the Gospel and the relief of the needy; to watch over and counsel one another in the spirit of brotherly love; to strive for the growth of the whole body in Christian knowledge and holiness, to govern their action, conversation and hearts by the precepts of God's Word.
2. It shall be the duty of all members removing from the vicinity of the church, to take letters of dismissal to other church of the same denomination, but should this not be practicable, to furnish their names and places of residence within three months after leaving the church, and to communicate with the church at last once each year.

3. It shall be the duty of absent members to send to the Treasurer of the Church a contribution for church expenses at least once a year, and as far as practicable to send offerings for missions, according to the plan adopted by the church
4. Resident members who, without reasons satisfactory to the church absent themselves from the services of the church for a period of six months, or absent members who neglect to communicate with the church for more than one year, or members who, if able, refuse to contribute to the expense of the church may, after being notified, be excluded for neglect of the church.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS

Section 1—Personnel

The Officers shall be a Pastor, 15 Deacons, 6 Trustees, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, Sunday School Superintended, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Sunday School Secretary, and Assistant Sunday School Secretary, Cradle Roll Superintendent, Primary Superintendent, Junior Superintendent, Intermediate Superintendent, Music Committee (3 to be elected), and a Moderator (if and when the Pastor does not desire to serve).

Section 2—Terms of Office

1. The Pastor's term of office shall be continuous, provided that the contract between the church and pastor may be terminated by either party by giving 90 day's notice of their intentions.

2. The Deacons shall hold office for three years. Five to be chosen each year.
3. The Trustees shall hold office for three years, two to be chosen each year.
4. Deacons and Trustees cannot be reelected until one year has elapsed.
5. The other officers shall hold office for one year.
6. If any vacancy occurs in any office, except the Pastorate, it shall be filled by appointment by the Board of Promotion until the next annual election, when such vacancy shall be filled in the manner prescribed for choosing such officer.
7. All officers shall hold office until their successors are elected and qualified.

Section 3—Election of Officers

1. At the Business Meeting to be held on the Wednesday Evening preceding the first Sunday in April of each year, all elective officers (not otherwise provided for) as named in Article V, Section 1, shall be elected for the ensuing year beginning May 1.

A committee on nominations shall be appointed one month previous to this meeting to nominate suitable persons for the respective offices. This committee shall consist of one person to represent each of the following departments: The Board of Deacons, Trustees, Sunday School, B. Y. F., Ladies Aid Society Men's Brotherhood, and the Women's Missionary Society, Other nominations may be made by any member of the church. No one may serve on the nominating committee who is subject to reelection.

2. The election of officers shall be by ballot, and a majority of all votes cast shall be necessary to a choice. (Fifteen members shall constitute a quorum. See Article VII, Section 1). The Pastor and Deacons must, however, be chosen by three-fourths of all votes cast.
3. In case of any omission to hold the election as above designated, the election shall be held at the next regular meeting for business.

Section 4—Duties of Officers

1. The Pastor shall be a members ex-officio of all boards and committees. He may call any board together for the transaction of business, and may call the church together in special business meeting. He shall devote his time and energies to the interests of this church, and receive such compensation as may be fixed by vote of the church.
2. The Board of Deacons shall have general charge of all meetings in the church. They shall select a standing pulpit committee to recommend suitable candidates for the Pastoral office whenever occasion requires, to provide for supplying the pulpit whenever a vacancy occurs, and arrange with the Trustees for payment of same. The Deacon in charge of meetings shall become a member and chairman of the supply committee. He shall also preside at any meeting where a supply is present. Two other members to be selected from the church membership. They shall supervise and dispense the charities of the Church, and shall have charge of the fund for that purpose. They shall appoint and oversee the

ushers and see that they perform their duty, that is; To seat the congregation, to welcome strangers, to promote hospitality, and as far as possible, to incite the membership to sociability. They shall see that members receive due Christian visitation. They shall see that new members receive due Christian attention and are engaged in Christian effort. They shall consult with and advise and assist the pastor as to the needs of his work. They shall report to the Church at its business meetings any non-communicating members. For the systematic performance of their duties they shall annually, after the Annual Business Meeting of the Church elect a chairman a Secretary, and a Treasurer, and further organize by dividing into committees of at least one member each, having charge respectively—subject to the general direction and approval of the entire Board—of the matters indicated by the following titles:

- (a) Committee on Meetings.
- (b) Committee on Sociables.
- (c) Committee on Charities.
- (d) Committee on Ushers.
- (e) Committee on Visitation.
- (f) Committee on New Members.
- (g) Committee on Pastor's Needs.
- (h) Committee on Baptism.
- (i) Committee on Lord's Supper.
- (j) Committee on Stewardship and Evangelism.
- (k) Committee on Deaths and Funerals.
- (l) Committee on Cub Scouts
- (m) Committee on Boy Scouts.

Each committee shall report to the Board at large, their acts and recommendations, in their respective departments. The Board of Deacons shall meet as often as once each month, and shall report to the Church in writing, at each business meeting such of their acts as should appear upon the Church records, including account of the fund for the needy. No collection for any charitable or benevolent purpose shall be taken at any public service or meeting of the church, except by consent of the Committee of the Board of Deacons having charge of the department.

3. The Board of Trustees shall organize by the election of a Chairman and Secretary, and the appointment of Committees as follows:

- (a) Committee on Improvements and Repairs.
- (b) Committee on Sexton.
- (c) Committee on Supplies, including fuel and sexton's supplies.
- (d) Committee on use of edifice.
- (e) Committee on Parsonage.

One or more trustees on each committee, and it shall be the special duty of each trustee to give attention to his department and to make to the Board such suggestions as may be proper, and the Board shall act in all proper cases through the proper members.

The Board of Trustees shall meet once each month and transact such business as may be proper. The Board of Trustees shall have the care, custody and control of all property of the Church, and shall make all ordinary

repairs and improvements, and recommend to the church such ones as they may deem wise.

They shall not sell, mortgage or in any way encumber the real estate of the church, except as directed by a vote of at last two-thirds of the members present at a special meeting called for such purpose, of which ten days previous notice shall be given. They shall not contract any indebtedness, nor expend more than the current receipts except as directed by a majority vote at any regular meeting of the Church.

They shall employ and discharge the sexton, and fix the rate of his compensation: provide for ordinary supplies, and regulate the use of the edifice. The Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall make to every regular business meeting of the church, a written report of such acts of the Board as should appear upon the Church records, and such report when received, shall be entered upon and be a part of the Church records.

The Board of Trustees shall audit the accounts of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, at least once each year.

4. The Treasurer shall receive and safely keep, all funds of the Church, except the fund for the needy, and shall, upon order from the Financial Secretary, pay from such moneys;
 - (a) To stated benevolent objects, the amount of collections and contributions specifically designated for the same respectively.

- (b) The current stated expenses of the church incurred by contract and provided for by appropriation.
 - (c) Any other bills or claims duly audited and approved by the proper committee of the Board of Trustees. In case of any deficiency of funds to pay current expenses he shall at once communicate that fact to the Board of Trustees and follow their directions in regard to disbursing the moneys on hand until they provide for the deficiency. He shall keep systematic account of the funds handled by him, report to the church at its monthly meetings all receipts and disbursements, preserve all vouchers for disbursements, and turn over such accounts, vouchers and balance of funds to his successor at the expiration of his term of office. He shall be ex-officio and advisory member of the Board of Trustees.
5. The Financial Secretary and his Assistants shall receive and count all moneys contributed for Church and benevolent purposes, keeping an accurate account of the same, and placing it in the hands of the Treasurer. They shall make a monthly report of all moneys received and turned over to the Treasurer.

The Financial Secretary shall issue an order on the Treasurer for all moneys disbursed, and keep a record of the same.

6. The Clerk shall keep full and correct records of all proceedings of the church, at the business meetings, and shall notify all persons entitled to notice of such meetings. He shall preserve all documents, papers and letters which come into his hands in his official capacity, and shall deliver the same, together with all records kept by him as above required, to the church, when his term of office expires. He shall prepare the statistical report and Church Letter to the Flatrock Association, subject to the approval of the Church.

ARTICLE VI. STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1—The Board of Promotion.

The Deacons, Trustees, Treasurer, Moderator, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, together with the Superintendent of the Sunday School and the heads of all the departments and societies organized within the Church shall constitute an advisory Board known as the Board of Promotion. Seven members shall constitute a quorum.

This Board shall meet on Sunday Evening just preceding each monthly business meeting at which any member of the church desiring it, shall have reasonable opportunity to present any subject relating to the interests of the Church.

It shall be the duty of this Board to confer upon the general interests of the Church.

It shall be the duty of this Board to submit to the Church such recommendations as may be referred to it by the Church. It may also make recommendations to the Church of its own motion. Any question which may be

brought before the church may, by a majority vote of the Church, be referred to the Board of Promotion. Special meetings of this Board may be called at any time by the Pastor or Chairman of the Board of Trustees, or by any three members of the Board, provided that notice of such meeting be given to every member of the Board, or that the same be properly announced at the Public Services of the Church on Sunday.

Section 2—Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary and chairman of the Board of Trustees. They shall have direction of all means approved by the church for raising revenues, and make a full report to the Church through the Financial Secretary, at the monthly business meetings, of all moneys received, disbursed and on hand.

Section 3—The Sunday School Committee

This Committee shall consist of the Superintendent of the School and the Superintendents of the Departments of the School and all other officers and Teachers of the School. They shall meet at such time and place as may be appointed by the Superintendent or by vote of the Committee.

Section 4—Committee on Religious Education

The Committee on Religious Education shall consist of the Superintendent of the Sunday School, Cradle Roll Superintendent, Primary Superintendent, Junior Superintendent, Intermediate Superintendent, and President of the B. Y. F.

Section 5—Music Committee

This Committee shall consist of three persons who shall appoint and direct the Musical Director, singers and musicians, and provide such music as may be needed for the use of the Church.

Section 6—Special Work

The church may at any time entrust special work not already provided for to such committee as it may Appoint.

ARTICLE VII. MEETINGS of the CHURCH

Section 1—the Transaction of Business

The Church shall convene on Wednesday Evening before the First Sunday in each month for the transaction of business. Fifteen members shall constitute a quorum. The following shall be the order of business:

1. Read the minutes of last Business Meeting.
2. Open the door for the reception of members.
3. Unfinished business. Reports of special committees.
4. Report of officers:
 - (a) Pastor.
 - (b) Deacons.
 - (c) Trustees.
 - (d) Treasurer.
 - (e) Financial Secretary.
 - (f) Clerk.
5. Reports of committee:
 - (a) Sunday School.
 - (b) Young People's Societies.
 - (c) Women's Missionary Society.
 - (d) Ladies Aid Society

- (e) Men's Brotherhood.
- (f) Music Committee.
- 6. New Business.
- 7. Adjournment.

Section..2—Yearly Meeting

At the Business meeting on Wednesday Evening before the first Sunday in May of each year, all officers, committees, and heads of departments shall furnish a yearly report in writing.

Section 3—Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Church for the transaction of business, when unexpected events occur, demanding the action of the Church, that could not properly be postponed until a regular meeting, may be called by the Pastor, or the Board of Promotion, provided that notice of the meeting be given from the pulpit on the Sunday previous.

Section 4—Regular Meetings

The Church shall meet regularly for the public worship of God upon every Lord's day, and upon such other days as may be deemed expedient.

Section 5—The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of each month.

Section 6—Meetings for Prayer

Once a week, at least, it shall be the duty of the members to meet for the purpose of prayer, mutual exhortation and devotional exercises.

ARTICLE VIII. CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1—Giving to the Church

As a church. we adopt the system of proportionate giving, as taught in the New Testament, "upon the first day of the week let every

one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him."

Section 2—Contributed Funds

All funds contributed by the members of this church shall be deposited in the treasury of the Church, subject to the order of the Church.

Section 3—Duty of the Church

The Church holds it to be its imperative duty to assist in making known the Gospel throughout the world, and to contribute to the various missionary and benevolent objects fostered by our denomination.

Section 4—Special Offerings

There shall be a special offering taken at each Communion Service for the relief of such members as may need pecuniary assistance, which the treasurer of the Board of Deacons shall receive and dispense, with no special report being made to the church except amount on hand.

ARTICLE IX. RULES OF DISCIPLINE

The New Testament shall be taken as a guide in all matters of Church discipline.

ARTICLE X. REPRESENTATION IN DENOMINATIONAL MEETINGS

Messengers shall be appointed each year to represent the Church in Flat Rock Association. The Indiana Baptist Convention and American Baptist Convention as provided in the by-laws of those organizations.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

These rules may be altered or amended at any business meeting of the church by a vote of three-fourths of the members present, provided, that at least two weeks' notice shall have been given at a regular preaching service of the Church.